

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION
DA-2010-60
December 21, 2010

SUBJECT: Federal Import Quarantine Order to Prohibit Australian Bees

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

This Federal Order prohibits adult honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) from Australia into the United States. Importation and interstate movement of honey bees to Hawaii and the U.S. Territories is already prohibited. Pursuant to this Federal Order, we are removing Australia from the list of approved regions for the importation of adult honey bees.

This action is necessary because the Administrator has determined that the introduction and establishment of exotic bee diseases and/or parasites that may be associated with Australian bee species including *Apis cerana* pose a serious threat to the United States agriculture including almonds, apples, blueberries, and other crops grown in the United States. The vast majority of importations are brought into California through San Francisco and Los Angeles for almond pollination. These bees, in much fewer numbers, have also been imported into Florida, Texas, and occasionally other states.

Following the May 2007 discovery of colonies of the Asian honey bee, *Apis cerana*, near Cairns, Queensland in Australia, concerns were raised that exotic honey bee pathogens or parasites may have been introduced into Australia with the arrival of this foreign bee. An evaluation of pest risks associated with imported honey bees from Australia raised questions regarding viruses that are not present in the United States. Viruses once thought to be inconsequential are now being reevaluated in light of transmission by Varroa mite, interactions with *Nosema ceranae*, and further complications from Colony Collapse Disorder. The United States typically begins importing bees in late November and continues through April; with peak imports occur in late December and January. There are no Federal domestic restrictions governing the interstate movement of honey bees in the continental United States. APHIS is taking this action to prohibit imports of Australian bees due to viruses and other diseases that could be introduced into the United States. Following issuance of this Federal Order, the United States will only allow the importation of queen bees and packages from Canada and New Zealand.

For additional information on the importation of Honey Bees, you may contact Dr. Colin D. Stewart, Senior Entomologist, APHIS, PPQ, RIPPS at telephone (301)734-0774 or email: colin.stewart@aphis.usda.gov

/s/ Paul R. Eggert for

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Plant Protection and Quarantine